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AN  
IMPARTIAL REVIEW  
OF THE  
*REVIVAL MOVEMENT*  
OF  
MESSRS. MOODY AND SANKEY.

*A Discourse*

*Delivered in Goswell Hall, Goswell Road, London, on Sunday  
Evening, May 16th, 1875,*

BY  
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“I am no party man,  
I care for measures more than men, but think  
Some little may depend upon the men ;  
Something in fires depends upon the grate.”—  
*Bailey's Festus.*

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LONDON :  
SMART AND ALLEN,  
London House Yard, Paternoster Row, E.C.

• SWINDON: PRINTED BY  
J. H. PIPER, "NORTH WILTS HERALD" OFFICE,  
BATH ROAD.

AN IMPARTIAL REVIEW  
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REVIVAL MOVEMENT.  

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A DISCOURSE.

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“These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.” *Acts xvii.*, 6.

**T**HE occasion on which these words were spoken will be familiar to most of you. Paul and Silas having escaped from prison, proceeded on their mission of preaching Jesus and the Resurrection. Reaching Thessalonica, they found a Jewish Synagogue, into which Paul, as was his custom, entered, and reasoned out of the Scriptures in favor of the new faith, which it was his mission to promulgate. Some believed, whilst others not only rejected his message, but raised a tumult in the city, and by means of instruments well adapted for the purpose, selected from the lowest stratum of society, set the whole place in an uproar. Jason and several other converts to the new religion were dragged before the rulers of the city, with the cry, “These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also. Whom Jason hath received : and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, *one* Jesus.” The charge was, of course, a most hypocritical one, since occupying the position that they did at the time, the Jews could have no great liking for Cæsar, and would certainly have been unlikely to manifest much opposition to any new king that might have been set up in his place. There was, however, after all, truth in the statement that the doctrines taught by these men were likely to turn the world upside down ; for Christianity did this in every country into which it found its way. From the very first it could be content with nothing short of its own pre-eminence and the consequent subjugation of all systems which might come into collision with its supreme authority. Had its first Apostles consented to allow Jesus

to have taken a place in the Pantheon amongst the innumerable deities that were at that time worshipped, no opposition would have been offered, and the fierce and fiery persecutions which the first Christians had to contend with, probably would never have been heard of. And the Romans would most likely be much puzzled to know why this was not done. The introduction of a new god would excite no ill-feeling on their part: but a new object of worship whose mission it should be to dethrone all the rest, and monopolise to himself supreme and undivided devotion, was something so foreign to their conception that they would probably fail to comprehend the motives that could induce any men to become the advocates of so extravagant a notion. Christianity, however, could have no truce with idolatry, or with sin in any form. It claimed the entire surrender of the heart and conscience to its authority, and hence wherever it went was calculated to turn the world upside down.

I do not seek to draw a parallel between the circumstance referred to in connection with the promulgation of the truths of the Gospel by its first advocates and the general excitement that prevails to-day in reference to the revival movement, except in the fact that to some small extent it may be justly said of the latter what was so truthfully affirmed of the former, that it tends to turn the world upside down. On all hands the interest felt in what is called the revival movement is very great. The secular papers from the *Times* down to the most insignificant provincial sheet have all had something to say about Moody and Sankey. Go where you will, little else is talked of but the revival services whether travelling by rail or in an omnibus, or paying a visit to a friend, or attending a public meeting, no matter for what purpose convened, or in any other way, jostling in the crowd and mixing with the busy mass of humanity, you are sure to be asked your opinion of the American Revivalists. The entire mass of society is permeated by an interest in this question. Seldom, indeed, have two men—especially men of an ordinary character, without rank or titles to recommend them, and with no state pageantry to mark their movements—been the subject of so much conversation and such conflicting opinion.

The views, of course, entertained respecting Messrs. Moody and Sankey are very various. With one class they are simply Yankee adventurers of the Barnum type, whose only object is to get up an excitement by playing upon the feelings of their hearers with a view to filling their own pockets. One writer suggests that, "on their return to the land of the everlasting dollar," they "will gaze upon their cosy homesteads, purchased with good



English gold, and, with a merry twinkle of the eye, exclaim, 'We have spoiled the Egyptians, I *guess?*'" Another speaks of Mr. Sankey's hymns as "pious Christy-Minstrelsy." A third—an American himself by the way—calls Mr. Moody "the Rev. Colonel Moody," and describes him as "at present engaged in the cheerful pursuits of making a corner in brimstone by saving English souls by the acre," and "pouring out theological perspiration and eternal brimstone, scaring the female bulls into hysterical salvation," and adds that "where the corpulent old expounder is known he is regarded as a selfish, sensual, hypocritical variagater of facts." By another class of writers the entire movement is believed to be the result of direct inspiration from heaven, and Moody and Sankey persons but little if any inferior to their Divine gifts to the Apostle Paul. Between these two opposite poles of the compass, of course may be found a large number of opinions of an intermediate character upon the merits or demerits of the American Revivalists. 'Tis true the great mass of men and women who make up modern society have no definite opinions either upon this subject or any other. They take their views from the circumstances by which they may chance to be surrounded and the influences to which they have been subject, and any scheme which happens to become popular may count upon them as ardent advocates. While the thing is in a minority they not only have no sympathy with it, but they never lose an opportunity of sneering contemptuously at those who enlist themselves under its banner; but no sooner does the tide turn in its favor than they gradually work their way to the other side, without perceiving that they are in any manner inconsistent in doing so, displaying just as little reason in accepting the new views as they had previously shown in adhering to the old ones. The opinion of such people is, of course, worthless upon any question, and I am sorry to say there is a good deal of such, very prevalent to-day, respecting Messrs. Moody and Sankey. Even those who are competent to judge must necessarily be to a large extent biased for or against the revivalists by the peculiar religious opinions which they themselves hold. And as we are all fallible in judgment and liable to be influenced in the direction in which the current of our thoughts is moving, we do well, in the investigation of a question of this kind, to steer as clear as possible of any theological doctrines, and to judge of the movement and of the men by whom it is carried on entirely by their own merits, and the effects that are being produced on society. The question is one which forces itself necessarily upon the attention of every thinking man, especially of every man who is engaged in instructing the public

in any phase of the great and momentous question of religion. Society is agitated to-day to its very foundation by this revival movement, and, whether it be productive of good or harm, it is impossible to shut our eyes to the tremendous effects to which it is giving rise. It will tend largely to influence thought and action on the part of many people for some years to come, and it is the business, therefore, of every public man to make himself acquainted with its character and results, in order that he may see clearly what attitude he is to take with respect to it. This feeling it was that led me to bestow upon it the consideration which I think it deserves, and which prompted me to announce the subject for this evening, in which I shall lay before you my views of the question—views that have not been arrived at lightly but after much serious thought and calm deliberation.

#### I.—THE NATURE OF WHAT IS TERMED A REVIVAL OF RELIGION

Of course this is a matter upon which we shall find the same difference of opinion prevailing that has been already mentioned in connection with Messrs. Moody and Sankey: that is to say, revival of religion, in the broad general sense of the term, forms a subject upon which men are no more agreed than they are upon the character of the special movement at present agitating English society. By one class the whole thing will be described as a delusion, based upon fanaticism and promoted by an energetic appeal to the emotional feelings of the lowest class of mankind; and by another it will be held to be a direct result of the operation of the spirit of God. The latter theory, whether true or false, certainly presents the fewest difficulties in the way of understanding the *modus operandi* of the change which it must be admitted is effected in the minds of certain persons through this movement. The former view explains nothing, because we are still left in the dark as to what constitutes fanaticism; how there can be any delusion in that which to tens of thousands of people is as real as their own existence; and why it is not as legitimate in the presenting a truth before the mind of a mass of people, to appeal to the emotional part of their nature as to seek exclusively to influence the reason. What is called the Revival, and following in its train a number of other circumstances connected with it hereafter to be dealt with, are stern and startling facts, and as such are not to be got rid of either by a contemptuous sneer or by a vague and reckless statement about delusions, fanaticism and the like. An explanation is surely possible, and such explanation we have a right to ask for.



Revivals are not confined to modern times. They have happened again and again in the history of Christianity, and sometimes outside of its domain. Among the ancient Jews great popular uprisings frequently took place. These were, however, perhaps more of a national than of a religious character, but then at that time religion and the nation were one, the whole people being immediately subject to Divine government, even in political and social matters. During our Lord's ministry on earth, great popular excitements were by no means uncommon. On several occasions the entire population appear to have been roused into a state of enthusiasm with regard to His doings. They followed Him in crowds, they strewed His path with branches cut from the trees, and shouted loud Hosannas as a herald to His approach. All else seems for a time to have been lost sight of in the very natural and legitimate enthusiasm which swayed the feelings and actions of the people. No doubt there were formal, rigid, system-mongering, routine-loving, hypocritical Pharisees, and cold-hearted, lifeless, sceptical Sadducees, who objected to the whole thing as being irregular and fanatical, but the movement being based upon the intensest feelings of the heart of the great mass of the populace, went on, notwithstanding. In the history of the Roman Catholic Church, especially before the time that it had departed so far from Gospel teaching and had become so thoroughly corrupt as to prove an offence to mankind, revivals were common, and productive frequently of the very best results. Among the numerous Protestant denominations, revivals have always been to a large extent recognised. Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, and all other religious bodies, with the bare exception perhaps of the Church of England—which is no longer an exception, for it too has joined in the present movement—have all been subject at different times to what is called revivalism. Here then is a fact of a most significant character. What is to be done with it? Some explanation must surely be possible, based upon human nature and the philosophy of mind.

A revival differs very considerably from any other kind of popular excitement with which we are acquainted. For while in all other cases where there is general disturbance in human feelings, consequent on some popular cause of commotion, the people will be found to be moved *en masse* towards some special end to which the uprising owes its origin. Individuality is completely lost sight of in the aim of the mass collectively. No one thinks of himself in the excitement of the time. Each person keeps in view only the common end for which all are working.

The movement may have for its object the Repeal of the Corn Laws, the prevention of any further encroachments on the part of the Papacy, the passing of a new Reform Bill, or the release of the Claimant to the Tichborne Estates. In all cases, the same principle will govern the agitation, the enthusiasm is evoked to some one end which is steadily kept in view by the people who take a part in the agitation, [and in the end to bring about which all individual considerations are lost sight of. All this is very unlike what happens in connection with what is called a revival of religion. Large masses of men are influenced, and perhaps, only in large masses is the excitement likely to reach the same height, since in religious matters, as in others, there are great numbers of persons who require the kind of aid which is to be procured only from coming into contact socially with people in the same frame of mind. But then here each one is bent on an aim which is related to himself individually. His own personal and eternal well-being constitutes to him the all-important question. He, no doubt, is concerned for the salvation of others, but that is by no means the feature in his feelings which is predominant at the time. Each person whom the excitement has taken thoroughly hold of, feels himself a sinner, and, as such, exposed to the wrath of God. He believes that he is in danger every minute of falling over a precipice, and of passing beyond the reach of salvation. God's broken laws, the intense pangs of an outraged conscience, and the frightful horrors of future punishment all rise up before his mind and combine to present a picture which is terrible to contemplate. Then comes the struggle of the soul after relief, and ultimately the light which breaks in, thoroughly dispelling the intense darkness that had previously prevailed. All this you see is individual in the strictest sense of the term. Herein consists the peculiarity of a revival of religion.

Now two important facts strike us here as happening in the experience of each of the individuals upon whom this influence comes, and these facts are of so significant a character that they demand an explanation at the hands of philosophy. They are universal in the experience of every person who accepts Christianity in the form in which it is here presented, and I need hardly say that the number who do so is exceedingly large. And whenever any fresh minds are brought under this same influence, no matter from what class of society they come, what may have been their previous opinions theoretically or conduct practically, to whatever race or variety—whichever term you like best—of the great human family they belong, their experience is always the same. The two facts are as stated by the persons themselves

who are the subjects of the experience, that first there comes into the mind an insupportable burden that presses down the soul with a heavy load such as it has never before experienced. Horrors, which imagination can hardly picture, crowd themselves into the mind, and the whole past life rises up in so black and terrible a form that it threatens to shut out all future light from every source. Sins previously committed, and which at the time appeared trivial and unimportant, are now seen to be loathsome and full of abomination. The gloom and melancholy which pervades the entire mental nature is so frightful as to be simply indescribable. All this is followed suddenly by an inexpressible relief which shoots across the mind with the rapidity of a lightning's flash, and the whole soul becomes lighted up with a calm and tranquil peace, a steady and settled joy, an overwhelming sense of delight such as has never before been experienced—such, in fact, as could not previously have even been imagined. Everything now appears in a new light, the peace and calm of Heaven reign supreme, the light direct from God's countenance illuminates every nook and cranny of the soul. Even nature wears another garb and appears clothed in perpetual sunshine. The cares and turmoils and troubles of life sink into such utter insignificance in the presence of the all-pervading bliss, that they are lost sight of as not worth one moment's consideration. Mankind appear in a new light, an influence is felt on their behalf which had not before been experienced, and an all-embracing love goes forth from the soul desirous of bringing the whole human family into the same happy frame of mind. Thus is realised to the strictest letter the statement of the Apostle Paul, that "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Now these two states of mind, in the order in which I have here placed them, fall within the experience, as I have before said, of all the persons subject to this influence. What is the explanation that philosophy or science, or scepticism has to offer? To say that the whole thing is a delusion leaves the matter just where it was before. To ascribe it to fanaticism in no way helps us out of the difficulty; and all talk about emotions, feelings, and excitement is utterly beside the question. The first frame of mind depicted might perhaps be explained on the ground that the persons who experience it have been horrified with hideous figures of God's wrath, and frightful pictures of hell-fire. But whence comes the second, and how does it follow so suddenly upon the first? How is the rapid, sudden and frequently unexpected transition from one to the other to be accounted for? And bear in mind, this change as



a rule does not occur amidst the noise and tumult of the public meeting, or even the more moderate excitement of what is called the "enquiry-room," but takes place in the majority of cases in the privacy of home, in the quiet stillness of the bed chamber or any other room where perfect solitude can be obtained. Whence came this overwhelming flood of light, unparalleled in the ecstasy that follows it by anything else which falls within the range of human experience? What is its origin? what its *modus operandi*? what are the laws which regulate its action? These are questions which psychology should be prepared to answer. If she cannot reply, let her confess her incompetency to the task, and we will seek the information elsewhere.

This is sudden conversion, and as such, will, no doubt, be objected to. "I don't believe in sudden conversion" is a statement that I repeatedly hear made when this subject is spoken of. I don't know, however, that your belief, or mine, will very largely affect the truth of this question, or of any other. It is exceedingly common now-a-days for people to say I don't believe this or I believe that, as though such an expression of opinion settled the question for ever. I need hardly say that many truths are disbelieved by great numbers of persons, and it is just possible that this may be one of them. There is something in the term sudden conversion which seems particularly objectionable to people in this age, though why it should be so it is very difficult to make out. There is a point, I suppose, in this, as in every other change at which the turning is sudden. For how can a turning-point be anything else but sudden. If a ship at sea is pursuing an easterly course and is compelled to tack round and steer west, there is clearly a point at which she turns, that is when she stops going in one direction and commences going in another. Or, to use a better illustration, suppose I throw a ball out of my hand up into the air, it passes upwards until the force is expended which it received from the action of my arm, when it turns round and comes down again. Now, to say that it passed from the upward movement into the downward movement gradually is the sheerest nonsense in the world. There must have been a particular point at which the change occurred, and there, according to the strictest principles of philosophy, the change was sudden. In any change that occurs it does not follow that those who are looking on from the outside are able to mark the turning-point; but a turning-point there most certainly is. Now what is the position of men with regard to this change called conversion? A doctrine that all men are sinners is not only scriptural, but strictly in accordance with the facts which fall within the range of ex-

perience. I suppose all men will admit that they have in the language of the Prayer-Book frequently "left undone those things which they ought to have done, and have done those things which they ought not to have done." I do not intend to enter upon the question of hereditary depravity, because that in no way affects the subject under consideration. As a matter of fact, not only is there sin in the world, but everyone feels that practically he has at some time or other by his own actions added to the general amount. At least I am not aware that I ever met with a man who refused to admit that he had frequently done wrong, and did I happen to come across such an individual, I should probably regard him as an impudent and conceited boaster, rather than as a man who was better than his fellows. Well, this being so, when a man gives himself wholly and thoroughly up to leading a new life, or, what is called in the language of the revival movement itself, gives his heart to God, there is a point at which he turns round and begins to move in the new direction, and the change which he undergoes at that point must be sudden. This is what is called immediateism, and it is so far correct. Although gradualism, which is generally spoken of as being antagonistic to it, is also true as it regards the curbing of evil passions, the keeping down unholy desires, and the entire subjugation of the lower and baser part of human nature. True conversion involves all this, and is both sudden and gradual. Sudden at the turning-point as occurs in the experience which I have already described, and gradual in the growth and development into the higher life. In what is called conversion there are two distinct changes involved which are well expressed by the Greek terms *μετάνοια* a change of mind leading on to *παλιγγενεσία* the newness of life.

There is, of course, involved in all this, very many points which are worthy of consideration, but which I have not time now to enlarge upon—points which characterise the particular theological opinions of those who believe in the revival movement, and in connection with which there is ample room for difference of opinion. But then persons who hold views in opposition to those of which I have been speaking should at least be prepared to give some sort of explanation of facts about which there is no dispute. The theology of the revivalist preacher may be erroneous, his information may be limited, his intellectual abilities of a low order, his education small, his talents inferior to those of many other men, but all this in no way affects the question of the nature of the stern facts standing out in such strong relief in the individual experience of those on whose minds the fruits of his labors are



seen. Speculative theology has very little to do with any revival movement: the whole thing is essentially practical; the men by whom the work is carried on may hold every variety of opinion with regard to the great Christian doctrines, and those who are more particularly the subjects of the influence may be, as they often are, entirely ignorant of the difference between one doctrine and another. This is, of course, only true of such doctrinal points as are not immediately involved in conversion itself, because in the very admission of the change certain principles are implied which cannot be set aside. Thus, if conversion be genuine and only to be explained on the theory put forward, not only by the revivalists, but by all Evangelical preachers, there is involved in the act itself the following truths:—1. That an immediate and direct operation of the spirit of God upon the mind of man is possible and frequently happens. 2. That sin is a great and terrible reality, a dark cloud, hovering over human nature and shutting out the light of the sun of heaven from man's eyes. 3. That religion is the only power by which the bonds of sin can be broken, and by which thorough and entire regeneration may be effected. These principles are involved necessarily in the change, if it be of the kind which I have described. If on the other hand that be not its true character, then let some sceptical philosopher help us to an explanation that shall prove more satisfactory.

## II.—RELIGIOUS EXCITEMENT, ITS NATURE, VALUE, AND SUPPOSED DANGERS.

A revival is necessarily a period in which the feelings of large masses of people are naturally excited to an unusual degree. There can be no doubt that the nerves of the persons who are more particularly the subjects of the change, are largely operated upon, and the influence frequently spreads by a sort of contagion from one to the other. And this is considered on the part of many well-meaning persons to be a strong objection to the whole affair. But excitement is assuredly not necessarily an evil; indeed, it may be, and frequently is, productive of a considerable amount of good. When it is said that a movement depends for its success upon a nervous influence, the statement made is a mere truism, since all movements in which human beings are concerned must necessarily be accomplished through the nervous system. Nervous action is as healthy as muscular or vascular action. God gave us our nerves to be used, and made them sensitive in order that they might be delicately susceptible of refined impressions. I do not find that those persons who oppose so strongly what is called religious excitement are in the habit of objecting to various other

kinds of excitement, although they may be carried to a much greater extreme. Indeed, not only is the excitement not objected to in regard to other movements, but every effort is usually made to fan it into a flame and turn it to practical account. It is even looked upon as a sign of healthy action. Take any great political or social agitation; attend the meetings of reformers of various kinds, who are working to bring about a change in society. Do you ever hear the speakers engaged in the advocacy of the particular cause under consideration warning their hearers against the danger of being led away by excitement? Why you know perfectly well that the more excitement they produce the better pleased they are with their success, and by the extent to which they succeed in rousing the feelings of the people do they judge of the likelihood of their ultimate triumph. Times and seasons and all kinds of machinery are taken advantage of for the purpose of producing an increased feeling upon every kind of subject but religion. As soon, however, as any excitement is observed in connection with this, clearly the most important question that falls within the range of human experience, a hue and cry is immediately raised about the danger of people being led away by their feelings. Of course, no one attempts to dispute that in excitements of any kind there may be a great deal of temporary feeling and spurious enthusiasm engendered, which can lead to no permanent good. But, in the first place, this is less applicable to religion than to those matters where the appeal is made directly to the senses, because an excitement springing from an internal source is, as a rule, more likely to be genuine than one which is based upon external influences; and, secondly, this being an abuse arising from an excess, can be no argument against the moderation which constitutes its true use. It is said that an excitement is always followed by increased apathy; but the reverse of this is also true, that long-continued apathy must be followed by increased excitement. When, therefore, a great revival occurs, instead of looking at it as a forerunner of a future apathetic condition, it will be just as rational to view it as a re-action, due to a previous long-continued state of torpid inactivity; and this no doubt it frequently is. Sluggish and slothful conditions of soul, which can only be broken up by these violent actions, are a thousand times worse than any undue excitement that may arise from the powerful agency thus so necessarily called into action. In truth, however, the danger of religious excitement as it presents itself to the mind of each person will be very much in the inverse proportion of that person's love for religion itself. The Rev. Dr. Huntington very aptly remarks, "Men are least apprehensive of too much feeling where they love most; and some

who have little fear of excess in pleasure-seeking in a gay season, in social brilliancy, in business, counting all days or nights and all companies and all energies suitable for them, appear to be nervously afraid if a few unusual hours in a week are given up to devotion ; to converse with our Maker ; to councils for the object for which Christ gave His life ; to the free unlocking of those grand commanding affections and aspirations in us through which all principles of justice and mercy for men grow, and which more than anything else determine duty ; to that life which is to go on when all of this world has vanished from us, and go on to eternity."

The simile which Christ used in reference to conversion in his conversation with Nicodemus is as appropriate as ever, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth, so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." True, we are somewhat better acquainted now than were the men of that time with the laws which regulate the wind—whence it comes and whither it goes—but that in no sense affects the beauty of the illustration employed by our Lord. The breeze may be gentle, so soft as scarcely to agitate the leaves on the trees, hardly moving the golden ears of grain drooping their heads ready for the sickle of the harvester, or barely disturbing the surface of the placid water as it sleeps in the bosom of the tranquil lake ; or, on the other hand, it may come with the rushing fury of the tempest, the terrible sweep of the hurricane, and the destructive violence of the tornado, bearing down all before it, uprooting trees that have withstood the storms of ages, and making playthings of the mightiest works of man. The same wind it is in both instances. So it is with the Spirit. In one case its action is gentle as the zephyr, in the other violent and sudden as the whirlwind—but the same Spirit in both cases. If you ask me which of the two modes I prefer, individually, I have no hesitation in replying the former ; but then the latter is also necessary. Violent storms, however destructive they may be at the time, tend to purify the air, and they consequently leave behind them results rich in blessings. The sudden and violent storms do not last, so neither do the great excitements consequent upon revivals. In each case, however, there remains behind, the permanent calm and the purified atmosphere, which, but for the storm, had not been experienced. It is often urged as an objection to revivals that they are not permanent. They do not need to be permanent, they are sudden flashes from the light of the spiritual tempest, by which the dark corners in certain minds can alone be lighted up, and the obdurate and hardened natures of the minds of certain classes of persons broken. These phenomena



re grand and glorious, accomplishing an end which probably would not be otherwise reached, and although apparently irregular in their action, yet working to a definite purpose and strictly in harmony with the laws of spiritual existence. The Rev. Henry Ward Beecher very admirably remarks, "You may laugh at men under conviction, but the evolutions that are taking place in the souls of men, when God's Spirit is working upon them in revivals of religion, have in them more grandeur than the evolutions at Waterloo, or in any battle that was ever fought upon earth." And the after results, although presenting less violent commotion, will yet be a vast improvement upon what had gone before.

It is often objected that men do in excitement what they would not do at any other time. This is quite true ; but before an argument against the revival can be based upon this fact, it must be shown that they do what is objectionable. In the heat and excitement of a great movement many feelings are awakened which would otherwise lie dormant, and some of these may possibly be of a character that would have been better not roused. But then, as a set off against this fact, there is the vast mass of good which is evolved out of the movement, and which, but for it, had probably also not have been manifested. That men commit indiscretions in connection with great states of religious excitement is quite true, but what movement is free from indiscretions of some kind or other? Assuredly there is nothing on earth that is altogether free from objectionable features of this kind, and in reference to the subject in hand an able writer has remarked, with great truth and *naivete*, "The greatest indiscretion that we can possibly fall into about religion is to let it alone." Revivalism leads, it is said, to fanaticism. Possibly in some cases it does, but not necessarily. A popular excitement may carry away the feelings of an entire community, but this is no argument against the excitement, but simply against the direction which it is allowed to take. Revivals, like all things else, require managing, and, as Mr. Beecher has remarked, they "are violent and untamable just in the proportion in which they are rare. They become amenable to good management just in the proportion in which they are frequent. Where communities have been absolutely neglected, when the fountains of moral feeling are for the first time in many years broken up, then you may expect catastrophe ; then you may expect a flood on the community. The fault lies not in the recurrence of life ; it is the long death in which the community has been left, that occasions the irregularities. The rebound will be just in proportion to the long decline and apathy." Revivals of

religion can be controlled and managed as easily as any other form of popular excitement, and should they run into excesses and thereby result in evil, the fault lies not in the movement, but in the mode in which it has been managed.

The statement has been repeatedly put forth that excitement of this kind lead to insanity. Men are driven crazy through revivals. This is possibly true, but, as a rule, such people had no far to go to reach the madness in which the excitement culminated. I have seen a good many people who have gone crazy, whose minds have most certainly not been disturbed by any religious influences. The wild talk in which folks indulge with regard to this matter betrays an alarming amount of ignorance. Thus, in a pamphlet which I have before me, professedly written by a "London Physician," but as the author's name is not given we have no means of ascertaining who or what he is, I find the following remarks on this subject: "The minds of thousands will be upset and the germs of insanity developed by these revivals, more especially amongst the youth of both sexes, where religious views are weak and unsettled. Many a happy home in this broad England will be rendered miserable and the lunatic asylums filled to overflowing. \* \* \* If a nuisance is created by an offensive manufactory, by bad drainage, or other breach of sanitary law there is an enquiry, attended generally with benefit to the public but here is a widespread canker, a fatal cancer, productive of misery galore, and no surgeon to step in and boldly cut it out and this in the year of our Lord, eighteen hundred and seventy-five!" And in another part of the pamphlet the writer goes on to remark, "In conclusion, I would call upon the 'Commons of England' to look into this matter; upon the Legislature to weigh its effects, and destroy this canker that has entered into the land, lest it increase and destroy the land." Such language is indicative, on the part of the writer, of gross ignorance and intolerant bigotry, and would be far too contemptible to notice, were it not for the fact that similar sentiments have been expressed by more than one newspaper writer, and are likely, therefore, to have some small amount of weight with a certain class of the public. Of course, a man's mind be thoroughly given up to the consideration of one subject, which he pursues unduly in season and out of season, to the neglect of everything else, keeping the one string of his mind in a state of perpetual tension, insanity is very likely to ensue. The undue excitement of the religious faculties does, no doubt, in some cases, lead to an aberration of intellect; but where there is one such instance there are thousands of cases of men driven mad by the cares and anxieties consequent upon business, by the pu



suit of pleasure, by the race after wealth, by dissipation, gambling, and vices of every kind. Some attempt to suppress the causes which give rise to insanity in these latter cases would be a commendable labor. But, alas! these are lost sight of by our own would-be philosophers, and religion singled out as the one cause of madness. Mr. Beecher has well said, "Twenty men may wear themselves out in business and die, either from softening of the brain or hardening of the heart, and nobody says a word about that. But if, in attempting to live a better life, there are one or two so organized that they cannot bear any excitement, and certainly not such an excitement as religion naturally creates, these are marked and held up as scarecrows." Let us hear no more about religious excitement driving men mad. If the "London Physician," as he styles himself, will enquire into the causes of insanity a little more carefully, he will soon cease writing such twaddle as he has indulged in in the pamphlet in question.

## II.—THE AGENTS BY MEANS OF WHICH A RELIGIOUS AWAKENING IS EFFECTED.

The various conditions of mind among mankind are, of course, liable to be influenced by different agents, whether in connection with religion or with other matters. The receptivity of truth, like the perception of beauty, differs very considerably in different men; and, as a consequence of this, the same kind of influence will be by no means uniform in its results when acting upon the minds of different persons. In some, the whole nervous system is sensitive, the mind active and impressionable; while in others there is torpor and inactivity with an inability to be roused unless some very potent agency is in operation. Sin, too, has the effect of hardening and petrifying the heart, so as to close it thoroughly against all influences for good, unless of an extremely powerful character. There are, therefore, many persons whose minds it is difficult for any religious influence to reach, unless it comes in the form of the "mighty rushing wind." To these persons a revival usually proves of the greatest possible benefit. The social effect of an influence of this kind is also very powerful. Great numbers of persons obtain a sort of social help in the elevation of themselves when mixing with others, either for the purposes of conversation upon intellectual and moral topics or for advancement in the spiritual life. The ordinary preaching does not reach large numbers of people who become affected by a revival; simply because the former flows on like the even course of a river passing over their souls, whilst the latter rushes with the force of the cataract, breaking down the rocks of unbelief and vice, and

carrying the fragments before the roll of its waters. There is, of course, the still small voice, about which we hear so much talk on the part of people who object altogether to revivals, which still small voice is no more believed in by many of them than is the wind, the flame, or the earthquake. To the soft and gentle influence of this voice few earnest people will object, and least of all shall I, since for me it has a peculiar charm, but there are other natures upon which it spends its power in vain. Mr. Beecher says of this voice that "it may be tender, gentle, sweet as a song, or it may be impetuous and harsh, rending as a storm." In both cases it will play an important part, according to the mind upon which it operates. One man is moved by eloquent oratory, while mighty thoughts are rolled out in thunder tones of Demosthenic eloquence; and another is stirred by the sound of a simple evening prayer uttered by baby lips. Dr. Bellows remarks, "As a rule, it is commonly not revival seasons, but the providence of God in some great calamity, bereavement or sickness, acting upon a nature which the long and seemingly ineffectual influences of Christian instruction had been steadily preparing for this result, that accomplishes the awakening work." This is unquestionably true in large numbers of instances, but there are exceptions and they are numerous, in which revival influences alone seem capable of rousing the dormant feelings into activity and stirring the inmost recesses of the heart. Shipwreck, storms, fire, heavy trials, sickness, and a thousand other circumstances have all been used as instruments by God in carrying out His work.

Where human agents are employed they will require to be formed in different moulds to meet the different cases and the various and strangely diverse minds with which they may be brought into contact. Education, science, culture, scholarly attainments, gentlemanly manners, fluency of speech, great command of language, an extensive knowledge of men and things, all these are extremely valuable and frequently productive of incalculable good. But then there are other cases in which the whole of them will fail to produce the slightest change in the minds of the men who year after year may be brought into immediate contact with them—cases in which a few homely words, spoken by a plain and unlettered man, will go to the heart, and work an everlasting change. And in such instances as these revivals are seen to prove most valuable agents for furthering the cause of religion.

#### IV.—THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRESENT REVIVAL MOVEMENT AND THE CAUSE OF THE SUCCESS OF MESSRS. MOODY AND SANKEY.

In some general respects the present revival movement is so

much like others that there would be a difficulty in distinguishing between them ; in other respects it has features peculiarly its own. It is, perhaps, more general than any revival that has been witnessed for a long time, and has certainly created a greater interest in society than any similar movement that has occurred within my recollection. This is, probably, very largely due to the fact that almost every denomination of Christians have lent their aid in helping it forward. Clergymen of the Church of England who, as a rule, are not predisposed towards lay preaching, and who do not usually look with favour upon movements of this character, are found on the present occasion working hand in hand with Dissenters and using their utmost endeavours to promulgate the principles of Evangelical religion. Things have wonderfully changed for the better since the last century, when Wesley and Whitfield went forth to endeavour to stem the torrent of vice and irreligion that swept with such force over the land, and when Church clergymen were found stimulating mobs composed of the lowest and most brutal persons not only to interrupt their preaching but to molest and assault the preachers. Now we find some of the leading men among the ministers of that same church working hand in hand with the two American laymen, taking part in their services, and aiding the work in which they are engaged by every means in their power. One other respect in which this revival movement differs to some extent from most of those that have preceded it is found in the fact that its influence is seen operating, perhaps to an unparalleled extent, upon what is called the lowest stratum of society. There is no doubt a very large class of persons to be found assembling at these meetings who are regular attendants at places of worship. This is proved by the fact that they are furnished with hymn books, join in the singing, and know when to stand up and when to sit down, but still it is quite clear that there are great numbers of people congregating at these large meetings who are totally unaccustomed to attendance at places of worship, and who belong to the class of people not reached by ordinary preaching. The fact that this low and uncultivated stratum of society is influenced by this movement furnishes an argument in its favour, the importance of which it is difficult to over-estimate. This very fact has, however, been quoted against the movement, by endeavouring to show that such a circumstance is very likely to disgust persons of a refined and cultivated mind, and to drive them away. And it is curious that the same objection is urged by people who, as a rule, have not usually displayed any very great liking for the cultivated and refined classes, but who have generally seen in them the personification of aristocratic pride and self-importance. If men,



however highly educated and well bred, and to whatever extent their minds may be cultivated, refined, and stored with knowledge, chose to stand aloof from a great and noble movement because some of the rough workers in the cause are not to their elegant taste, why let them go ; their services can be dispensed with and their places filled by more earnest and less fastidious men.

Now, what is the cause of the success of Moody and Sankey ? On all hands they have been abused, described as noisy fanatics, outrageous humbugs, rank impostors, hypocrites, dodgers, schemers, etc., whose only object is to make money. The "London Physician" speaks of them as "two Yankees, sleek-oiled, sly, and ignorant of the rules of syntax," preaching "hysterical religion," and conducting a revival in a fashion "redolent of greenbacks" and "suggestive of the almighty dollar." And one newspaper has employed in reference to them far stronger language than even this, which is saying a good deal. We take it that Messrs. Moody and Sankey are too much in earnest in the work upon which they are engaged, to care one straw for this coarse and vulgar abuse, whether it comes from a "London Physician," a newspaper editor, or a Billingsgate fishwife. It is the easiest thing in the world to call names ; any idiot can do that if his mind is coarse enough and the language which he is in the habit of using sufficiently low for the purpose. What we have to do with, and what has to be accounted for and explained, is the immense success which has attended the labors of these men. They draw crowds, composed of people that must be numbered by tens of thousands. They move to its foundation the entire mass of society ; their every word is printed and circulated throughout the length and breadth of the land ; their speeches are heard with attention by thousands of men and women who hardly ever listened to a religious address before in their lives, and afterwards read by thousands of others who reside too far away to attend personally their ministrations. And the secret of this tremendous and almost unparalleled success is to be found, where ?

The machinery employed for carrying on their work is said to be perfect. Arrangements are made with the ministers of every denomination to hold prayer meetings and other special gatherings in their respective neighborhoods. Advertisements are inserted in all the leading papers, and the town placarded with huge posters announcing their meetings. Thousands of copies of religious papers specially devoted to their work are distributed gratuitously among the congregations of the churches and chapels, and publicity given in every possible way to their proceedings. All this is quite

true, but if you suppose that it is of itself sufficient to account for one-tenth part of the success of these men you fall into a mistake which no man would make who had had any experience worth naming in getting up public meetings. I have had much to do with popular agitations and with advertising, during the past thirty years, and I am sure that no amount of newspaper publicity and no perfection of arrangements will account for the tremendous effect that is being produced at the present time in society, especially the deepening interest which is every day being experienced.

Then, again, Mr. Sankey's singing has been considered sufficient to explain the popularity of the movement, which is perhaps still more absurd than the idea of ascribing it to the extensive advertising resorted to. Mr. Sankey's singing is, no doubt, very attractive, and tends to produce a most harmonious and agreeable feeling in the minds of those who attend the meetings, but to say that it alone would induce people to go by tens of thousands to the Agricultural Hall, or to the new building erected at Bow, is to talk nonsense. Why, Sims Reeves, and Santley, and Madame Titiens, and Adelina Patti, and a whole opera company combined could not bring half the number of people together, night after night, especially the class of persons who are found at these meetings.

Of Mr. Moody it may be said that he is neither an orator nor a scholar ; but a rough, homely man who tells a plain, unvarnished tale in the simplest possible language. There are certain characteristics, however, in his teaching which stand conspicuously in the foreground, and which must strike the most superficial observer. Everything respecting him is perfectly natural. There is no attempt at display, no straining after effect, no aiming at great results. He has his story to tell and he tells it in a manner which shows that he thinks of nothing but the message which he has to deliver. He does not preach, he talks. The enormous size of the building and the tremendous crowd of persons listening to him seem to be viewed by him only as so many members of a social circle, who are to be talked to only in an ordinary conversational tone. The old adage, *Ars est celare artem*, is scarcely applicable to Mr. Moody, because in reality he has no art to conceal. As Mr. Dale, of Birmingham, has said, "He has nothing of the impudence into which some speakers are betrayed, when they try to be easy and unconventional ; but he talks in a perfectly easy and unconstrained way, just as he would talk to half-a-dozen old friends at his fireside. The effect of this is very intelligible. You no more think of criticising him than you think of criticising



a man you meet in the street and who tells you the shortest way to a railway station." And there can be no doubt that this is one of the secrets of his success with that particular class of persons who crowd in throngs to hear him.

Another characteristic, and, perhaps, the most striking of all, is his intense and thorough earnestness. With him there is but one subject on earth worth a moment's consideration, and that is the salvation of the soul. Science, literature, knowledge of every kind, would be to him useless, except so far as they might be made subservient to the purpose of promulgating the solitary truth which is not only uppermost in his mind, but which completely eclipses and throws into the background all the rest. Mr. Conway, in a discourse delivered on the subject of the revival, relates a circumstance—for the purpose of condemning it, of course—which occurred at the Agricultural Hall. "Recently," he says, "a Unitarian entered their rooms for private enquiry, and told the chief revivalist that he had difficulties of a scientific kind about the Bible. 'Bah,' replied the revivalist, 'if you want to save your soul you must never mind what the scientific men say.'" This Mr. Conway, of course, goes on to speak of as "the natural result of ignoring all the knowledge that has been accumulated for a thousand years." Now I am not quite sure but what Mr. Moody was perfectly right in the course that he took. I think I may, without egotism, lay claim to be considered as knowing something of science; I have devoted the greater part of my life to its study, and should be the last person in the world to ignore its value, and yet I think that the revivalist, in this case, was, in all probability, right in the course that he took. What did the Unitarian want in the enquiry-room at all asking questions about science and the Bible? He knew perfectly well that it was no part of Mr. Moody's business to reconcile these, or to clear up difficulties consequent on their supposed disagreement. But in any case Mr. Moody believes in saving souls, and that only, and it was not very likely, therefore, that he would waste his time talking to this Unitarian on such questions as the antiquity of the earth and the origin of man. To him the doctrines that he preaches are as certainly true as the fact that he himself is a living being. He has no more doubt of the direct and immediate agency of the Holy Ghost upon his hearers than he has of the fact of an audience being congregated before him. And this earnestness, which absorbs his entire being, makes everything else subservient to its power and reigns in his mind the one dominant idea, conduces wonderfully to his success—is, in fact, one of the greatest secrets of his power. The statement sometimes made that he does not believe what he teaches, but is actuated in his work by the desire to amas-

health, is so supremely preposterous that it is not worth one moment's consideration. Whenever did a man who was not in earnest shake society to its foundation as this man is doing? Enthusiasts have ere now moved the world; hypocrites never.

One charge frequently brought against Mr. Moody is that he is coarse and vulgar. This is not true in the sense in which the terms are generally understood, although, no doubt, his phraseology is such as is not heard frequently from the pulpit. But for that very reason it reaches the hearts of large numbers, upon which more refined and elegant language would fall powerless. He talks to his hearers in words which they understand, selects illustrations from subjects with which they are familiar, and does not arrogate to himself a priestly superiority over those who listen to him. He wears no gown; is not called reverend; avoids everything like sacerdotal show and ritual display. He feels that he is a man talking to men like himself, and delivering to them the one important message which, when they have learned, they may also in their turn become the means of carrying to others. Mr. Beecher, who thoroughly understands human nature, and is, perhaps, himself the greatest preacher of modern times with one or two exceptions, says: "Most revivalists that I have known are men with immense bellies and immense chests, and big under-heads. They are men that carry a great deal of personal magnetism with them,—a sensuous magnetism, too,—and they have a great power of addressing the under-mind; and they will set feelings undulating like waves, and will carry men on them." The prophet who goes forth in an age where evil influences abound; and at a time when vice and error hold society spell-bound by their terrible fascinations, having in view the one object of crying aloud against sin, wherever he may meet with it, in the hovel or in the palace, must not be overchoice about the refinement of his manners, the elegance of his diction or the accuracy of his grammar. The work to be done is rough work, requiring courage, strength, energy, determination, and perseverance; and the man who has these qualities is best adapted for the purpose, whatever may be his short-comings in regard to education, refinement, or general knowledge.

#### V.—THE RESULTS OF THE REVIVAL UPON SOCIETY.

This is, perhaps, the most important aspect of the whole affair. All criticism on the nature and *modus operandi* of the movement sinks into insignificance beside the consideration of its result upon society. What will be the out-come of the whole thing? What will be its influence upon the present generation? And what is likely to be the effect produced in the future upon the

next generation? It is quite clear that a movement of so extensive a character must leave behind it some trace for many years to come; and whether the results, therefore, are for good or evil is a matter of the very greatest importance. Mr. Conway remarks, "Only utter ignorance of the simplest physiological laws can regard this process as having anything religious or moral in it. On the contrary, it has a demoralising effect on the individual like any other intoxication, its transient elevation is generally followed by deep depression. The convert finds himself no better for having been converted, but somewhat worse." Now this is so utterly untrue that one finds a difficulty in knowing how to deal with it. By what possible chance could these converts be worse than they were before? Remember who and what they usually are. In a great number of cases they consist of low, brutal, degraded beings, lost to all sense of decency and propriety, steeped in sin, grovelling in vice, reared up amongst crime, surrounded from infancy by every kind of iniquity, and constantly subject to influences calculated to suffocate and destroy any spark of purity and virtue that might be found remaining in their hearts. Many of them alternate throughout life between the tap-room and the gaol, and those who escape the latter only get a larger share of the former, and it is difficult to say which is the worst of the two. The homes of these men are loathsome hovels, reeking with filth and impurity of every kind; their families are neglected, starved and, what is worse, left destitute of any good influence to operate upon their minds. The females are low, vulgar, dirty, slovenly, debased, gin-drinking, swearing specimens of humanity, whom it were to speak of too kindly to call them women. The men are even, if possible, still worse, occupied in thieving, reveling in debauchery, besotted with drink, and delighting in everything that is vile, disgusting, and unholy. And you talk of making these people worse. Why in the first place they are so bad, that to become worse at all is next to impossible, and in the next place the only means by which they can be reached, and, therefore, raised, is by such kind of influence as that which accompanies the revival movement. Look at some of these men a few weeks after they have been converted. You find them clean, decent, and as well behaved as they can possibly have learned to become in the time. Low, vile, and filthy language is used no longer, the tap-room is forsaken, and the money earned is expended upon the family. And these men are made worse, are they? Go ask them what they think of it themselves; ask their wives and their children; enquire of their neighbors; question their associates; seek the information from their employers; and see how different



ll be the tale told by all these, to the scandalously false statement made by Mr. Conway.

Changes such as these have been effected by hundreds through the agency of the revival movement. They are to be found in every town as vestiges of the good that has been done. Now I ask you what else could have reached these men so as to lift them up out of the mire in the way they have been raised and elevated? Suppose you had talked to them about science, or philosophy, or literature, or culture, or secularism, or moral precepts, what think you would have been the result? They would have laughed you to scorn, ridiculed you as a good-natured, well-meaning fool, unworthy of a place in a lunatic asylum, and probably have ended by robbing you or ill-treating you. There is nothing in the world but religion that can change such people as these; and it is only men like the stern, rough, homely, revivalist preachers who can bring religion before their notice.

There is yet another cry in reference to this matter urged even by those who admit the change effected in the kind of persons I have spoken of, which is that the results are not permanent, but that speedily such characters will return like the dog to his vomit. Upon what ground this statement is made it is exceedingly difficult to tell, but it has been repeated so often that nearly everyone has come to believe it true. Now, supposing it were really to turn out that these prophesiers of evil are correct, and that all the persons who have been converted through the agency of the revival movement will ultimately fall back into the state from which they were temporarily rescued. Even then some good would have been done. In the first place, there would have been a small oasis of virtue in the great desert of vice of which their lives are made up; and in the second place their hardened natures once having been broken up and brought under the operation of religion, would always be in future more susceptible of influences of this same kind, and the chances would be therefore that they would again come back into Christ's fold. But you know very well that the supposition that the whole of these people will fall back into their old ways is simply preposterous. Some of them will do so, no doubt; that is to be expected. But the great mass will not. Possibly not one out of ten will fall, and, therefore, virtue and religion are immense gainers. By such facts as these you may judge of the effect of the revival upon society.

On the whole, then, I look upon the revival movement as indicating that an immense wave of spirituality is passing over the land. God's blessing is being showered upon society in these

corrupt, degenerate, and unbelieving times. Men are being raised from the lowest depths of degradation, and having their feet placed firmly upon the rock ; the Sun of Righteousness bursts out through the dark clouds of sin and error and illumines the world lying so long in the arms of the Evil One. May the work prosper and God's blessing rest upon it. I conclude with the following lines of a new hymn recently written by William Cullen Bryant, one of America's foremost poets :—

As shadows, cast by cloud and sun,  
Flit o'er the summer grass,  
So, in Thy sight, Almighty One !  
Earth's generations pass.

And while the years, an endless host,  
Come pressing swiftly on,  
The brightest names that earth can boast  
Just glisten, and are gone.

Yet doth the Star of Bethlehem shed  
A lustre pure and sweet ;  
And still it leads, as once it led,  
To the Messiah's feet.

O Father ! may that holy Star  
Grow every year more bright,  
And send its glorious beams afar  
To fill the world with light.



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